

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY**  
**Bureau of Customs and Border Protection (CBP)**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**Contact: Doug Mosier at (915) 834-8311**

## **Border Patrol Alerts Community of Smuggling Tactics**

### *Gas Cans, public sympathy Used to Gain Access into United States Illegally*

**El Paso, Texas** –Border Patrol agents in El Paso are issuing an alert to area residents to be aware of a ploy being used by illegal immigrants entering the country through a fence along Paisano Drive. They are posing as stranded motorists, with red gas can in hand, as a ploy to obtain a ride from well intentioned motorists. These “Good Samaritan” motorists then give the aliens a ride to desired locations further in town. What the motorists usually don’t know is that these illegal aliens are part of an organized smuggling ring and may be carrying narcotics.

Officials say that, aside from being a violation of law, these smuggling schemes on Paisano Drive create traffic hazards for the motorists themselves and other members of the general public. It is also worth remembering that this particular area along Paisano has been the scene of several assaults and robberies against motorists by assailants who then fled back to Mexico. Additionally, picking up a hitchhiker is always a dangerous activity.

“In this case, our primary concern is for the safety of the motorists who may unwittingly pick up an armed subject or a narcotics smuggler,” said El Paso Sector Chief Patrol Agent Luis Barker. “Motorists need to be aware that picking up a hitchhiker in this area could lead to a harmful and or embarrassing situation. Some of the aliens caught using this ruse have been found in possession of narcotics and have extensive criminal backgrounds.”

Officials say this gas-can ploy has been witnessed on a frequent basis by Border Patrol agents working in this area. The Border Patrol has determined that the method of operation is for smugglers in the Ciudad Juarez area to charge aliens between \$250 and \$1,000 to furnish them with a gas can. Smugglers then instruct the aliens on what to say to unsuspecting drivers who pull over and offer assistance. The aliens then ask to be taken to a particular location where they will next make contact with another smuggler who picks them up and provides transportation to “stash” houses in the El Paso area in furtherance of the smuggling scheme.

Border Patrol agents continue to patrol this area and will stop anyone seen picking up these hitchhikers. This may mean a period of delay for the motorists as agents investigate what may be a bona fide smuggling scheme. The goal of the Border Patrol is to avoid unnecessary delays for motorists travelling along Paisano Drive, however, delay will be necessary while agents sort out whether the driver is an innocent bystander or actually involved in alien smuggling.

Officials point out that signs have been placed warning motorists against picking up hitchhikers in the area.

On March 1, 2003, the United States Border Patrol became part of the Bureau of Customs and Border Protection (CBP), under the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

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